

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 1062

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be removed from cosponsorship of H.R. 1062.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

FREEDOM FROM RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION ACT

(Mr. WOLF asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on behalf of millions of people of faith around the world who are living in fear of religious persecution. In order to draw attention to this modern day tragedy, a number of Members, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. HALL] and others, have introduced the Freedom From Religious Persecution Act, which has over 40 cosponsors. I urge and beg my colleagues to cosponsor this bill and send a message around the world that America will not be silent on this issue.

The bill addresses the great untold human rights story of decades, persecution of peoples of faith around the world, Christians, Buddhists, Muslims, the Bahai faith. Slavery thrives in Sudan and this Congress does not a darned thing about it.

I hear Members talk about it, they give speeches about it, but, frankly, we do nothing about it. I urge my colleagues to do something about it. Cosponsor this bipartisan bill which has 40 cosponsors and let us pass it whereby we can help people of faith around the world.

The bill does a number of things. It focuses on persecution; abduction, enslavement, imprisonment, killing, forced mass resettlement, rape, or torture. It establishes an office in the White House to monitor religious persecution and requires the director to report to Congress whether foreign governments actively participate or fail to take steps to curtail religious persecution. It shuts off aid and requires U.S. executive directors to vote against multilateral development bank loans to persecuting countries. And it improves refugee and asylum procedures to ensure those seeking refuge from persecution are not turned away from a country which has historically welcomed religious victims.

The time has come for Congress to take a stand. Mr. Speaker, our bill would ensure that we take a new approach to this growing problem—an approach that says we will no longer be silent when regimes terrorize or allow terror against its religious believers. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this bill.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. JACKSON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. JACKSON of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. HULSHOF] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. HULSHOF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. FLAKE] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. FLAKE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. PAPPAS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. PAPPAS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania [Mr. PITTS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. PITTS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky [Mrs. NORTHUP] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. NORTHUP addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. DREIER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

THE AMERICAN HERITAGE RIVERS INITIATIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Idaho [Mrs. CHENOWETH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CHENOWETH. Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons for America's strength

and her rise in economic ability is because of the wise use of her rivers and waterways for irrigation, travel, recreation, power, flood control, and all other uses.

Mr. Speaker, through the wise use and allocation of our Nation's waters we have literally turned our deserts into gardens, but tonight I rise to alert my colleagues and inform our constituents of the most recent assault by the Clinton administration on private property rights, States rights, and western values. That is the administration's American heritage rivers initiative, created and tendered solely by the White House, and executed without congressional approval.

Just before the Memorial Day work period the Council on Environmental Quality, an unauthorized agency existing on misappropriated funds, I might add, published this proposal in the Federal Register entitled "The American Heritage Rivers Initiative." It is in the Federal Register, May 19, 1997, page 27253. I urge my colleagues to read it.

Although law requires a 90-day public comment period, this comment period ends June 9, 1997, a mere 3 weeks after its date of publication; 3 weeks, not 3 months, as the law requires. This violates the Administrative Procedures Act and totally ignores the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Fortunately, today, Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Alaska, Mr. DON YOUNG, chairman of the Committee on Resources, and the gentleman from Oregon, Mr. BOB SMITH, chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, along with myself and other Committee on Resources chairmen, have sent a letter to Katy McGinty strongly advising CEQ to extend that comment period to make it legal at least another 90 days. I am sure that the gentlewoman would be wise to follow this advice, and I will enter this letter into the RECORD.

Mr. Speaker, I have grave concerns about this initiative. The American heritage rivers proposal is just one in a string of the Clinton administration's attacks on our Western public lands. This is a Nation of laws, but from the Utah Monument to ecosystem management projects to the BLM's law enforcement regulations, this administration has demonstrated an absolute lack of regard for our Nation's laws and regulations, including requirements of environmental law.

I ask, where is the documentation required under the National Environmental Policy Act? Where is the notification and full public comment required under the APA? By the way, who is paying for this?

Again, the President is attempting to foist a program upon us, without us. Mr. Speaker, the very nature of how this proposal was constructed raises many troubling questions. For instance, since the American heritage rivers initiative has never been authorized by Congress, exactly which land and water program funds were siphoned